

**Consideration of the dedication of the Merry Lea Addition Nature Preserve in Noble County**

The proposed Nature Preserve is a 144.37 acre property in southwestern Noble County. This nature preserve is located approximately 2.5 miles southwest of Wolf Lake, in Indiana's Northern Lakes Natural Region. Goshen College uses this area as an outdoor laboratory for environmental and ecological education. The decades of restoration of the natural communities has afforded a great educational experience for students and long term academic study.

The proposed nature preserve primarily consists of wetlands, marsh and tamarack bogs, natural lakeshore, lowland forest, upland forest, savanna and prairie. These communities support a wide variety of endangered, threatened or rare species; including the blue spotted salamander, Blanding's turtle, *Isotria verticillata* – whorled pogonia, *Lycopodium clavatum* –running ground pine, and *Larix laricina* – the tamarack tree.

Merry Lea lies within the area of Indiana carved out and then filled in by the advance and retreat of the Wisconsin glacier. The glacial topography consists of a moraine lake with associated meltwater wetlands, and forested depositional esker uplands that support savannas. The wide variety of soils is a notable feature of the preserve yielding diverse natural communities.

This Nature Preserve was conceived in the 1960's by Lee and Mary Jane Reith to fulfill a desire to preserve one of Indiana's finest natural areas and to establish an environmental education center. In partnership with the Nature Conservancy and over a period of several years, during the 1980's the Reith's donated approximately 590 acres. Today the educational campus is over 870.0 acres.

This tract is owned by Goshen College and under the administration of the Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center.

The Division of Nature Preserves recommends dedication of this site as a State Nature Preserve.

Attached is Nature Preserves exhibit A.

**Merry Lea Addition Nature Preserve**

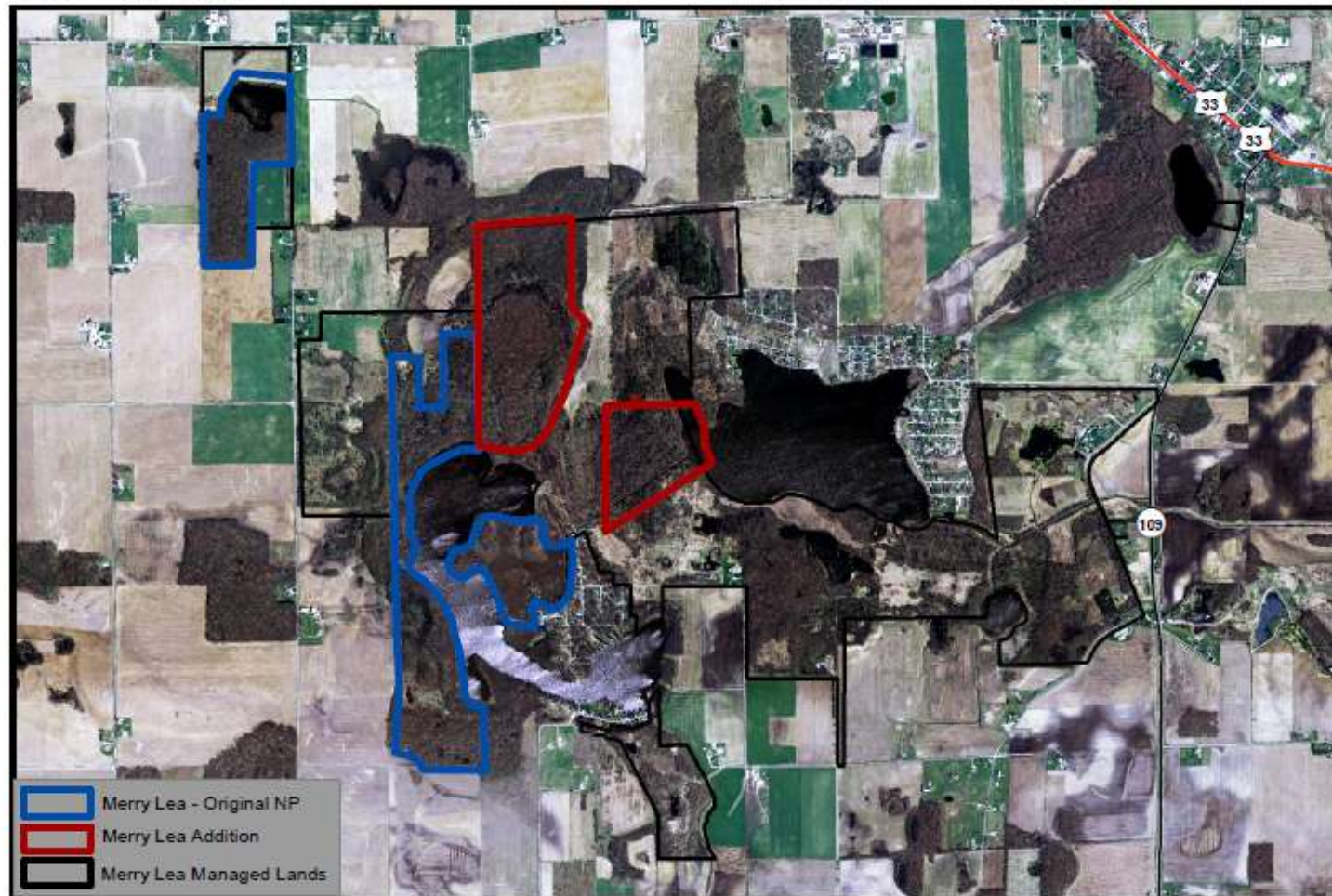
County: Noble

Size: 144.37 acres

**Exhibit A**

USGS Quad Map: Ormas

Ownership: Goshen College



map created by R Wilson IDNR Nature Preserves 6.21.2013

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

